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Housekeepers' Chat

Fri., Jan. 6, 1928

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "The Hot Lunch at School." Quoted material from Circular 127, "The Hot Lunch in Rural Schools," by Gladys Stillman, Extension Service, College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Club reports from Office of Extension Service, U. S. D. A. Program approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "School Lunches."

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Much has been said and written about the importance of hot school lunches for school children. Not long ago I read a pamphlet on "The Hot Lunch in Rural Schools," which contains such good information that I'm going to quote part of it:

"By the hot lunch, we mean that part of the noon lunch which is prepared at school. It adds to, but does not take the place of, the lunch brought from home. It need not mean more than the serving of one hot dish, such as cocoa, or a nutritious soup.

"Hot soup, or a hot drink, served at school makes a good meal of the cold lunch carried in the lunch box or dinner pail. One cold meal, for one day, may not mean much, but hundreds of cold meals, in the course of the eight years in school, may mean the difference between a poorly nourished child and a well-nourished child; poor health and good health; poor digestion and good digestion.

"The hot lunch means that the child will be better nourished. Better nourished, he can do better school work, for what is good for the body, is good for the brain. With a better body and better school training, the child is better fitted to be useful and successful when he grows up. No amount of good food and care, in later years, can make up for the lack of right food for the growing child.

"The serving of a hot dish is one of the ways to overcome the hardship to the country child of taking his cold lunch to school. Every mother should see that her child has this addition to the lunch-box meal for the sake of the child's health. Every teacher should encourage the serving of the noon meal, because it means a higher standard of school work.

"The advantages of the hot lunch, properly conducted, are many. Better health is, perhaps, the most important. The children enjoy the lunch more if there is a hot dish. Eating the lunch under the teacher's supervision results in slower eating, and thorough chewing of the food. Hasty eating causes indigestion, and consequent ill health. Better table manners are encouraged, since each child waits until all the others are served, before beginning to eat, and waits until all are through, before being excused from his desk. Better serving, selection, and clearing away of food are taught. Better school work results from better health conditions. Better school attendance comes as a result of the enjoyment



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the children get from the party spirit which the school lunch affords."

Now I'm going to tell you how hot lunches are handled in two schools, in the state of Maryland.

Two years ago a teacher in a certain rural school in Maryland became so much interested in serving a hot lunch for her pupils that she helped organize a Girls' Four H Club. The Parent-Teachers' association and the Superintendent of Schools contributed money for the hot lunches. The club girls got together the necessary equipment, including a three-burner oil stove, and the hot lunches were started. Each pupil brought his own cup and spoon, and hot lunches were served at the school, two noons a week, until warm weather. For several weeks, the Home Demonstration Agent made weekly visits to this school, and gave directions for preparing and serving, soup, cocoa, creamed vegetables, and so forth. The children were also urged to bring healthful foods in the lunch boxes they carried from home.

My next story is about the Hutton club, organized in Maryland as a Hot Lunch club. The hot lunch idea was presented to the parents at a Parent-Teacher's meeting, by both the teacher of the school and the Home Demonstration Agent. Enough money was secured to buy equipment, and the Lunch Club was started.

Now Hutton had a two-room schoolhouse, but as it happened, one of the rooms was not being used. The cloakroom of this unused school room was fitted up as a kitchen. Fortunately, the cloakroom was located on the outside wall, and had two well-placed windows in it. The club girls painted the walls a buff color. Then they varnished the shelves. Some one supplied linoleum rug for the floor. A table was covered with white oilcloth. A stand was provided for the oil stove, and a stool for the water pail. Last but not least, the club girls made unbleached muslin curtains, bordered with blue checked gingham, for the windows. The little kitchen was very attractive, and the girls took so much pride in keeping it clean that the room fairly shone.

Captains were appointed, with teams, to take care of the hot lunches. Supplies were donated by the patrons of the school, and a hot lunch was served every day. For several weeks, the girls received help from the Home Demonstration Agent, but after that they worked alone. The teacher of this school says that her pupils did far better work, as a result of the hot lunch. As a matter of fact, records show that in schools where one or more hot foods are served, the scholastic rating is higher, and there are fewer underweight children.

We have just time enough now to answer a few questions, and broadcast a menu and a recipe.

First question: "Does milk contain minerals?"

Answer: Milk does contain minerals. It is especially valuable as a source of calcium, which is needed for bones and teeth. Children need lots of calcium, to build good strong bones, and sound teeth.



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Second question: "What foods are good for anemic children?"

Answer: Anemic children need such foods as egg yolk, which is unusually rich in iron, prunes, raisins, orange juice, green vegetables, especially spinach, and liver. Liver is considered particularly beneficial for anemic persons.

Please get your pencils, now, for the menu: Ham and Potatoes en Casserole; String Beans; Spiced Crab Apples; and Grapefruit, with Tokay or Malaga grapes. The grapefruit is very easily fixed. Cut the grapefruit in half, remove the pithy center, cut the sections loose, and fill the center with a few Tokay or Malaga grapes, which have been cut in two, and had the seeds removed.

I'll give you directions for cooking the ham and potatoes. If you have a copy of the radio cookbook, you need not write this down, for the recipe is in the cookbook.

This is the recipe, for Ham and Potatoes, cooked together in a baking dish, or in a casserole:

Place a thick slice of ham in a good-sized baking dish. Add thinly sliced raw potatoes which have been sprinkled lightly with flour. Pour over them enough milk to cover. Bake slowly for about an hour and a half, or until the potatoes and ham are thoroughly cooked. Cover the baking dish for the first hour of the cooking. The salt and fat of the ham are sufficient to season the potatoes. If necessary, add a little hot milk from time to time during cooking. There should be enough liquid to form a tasty gravy around the ham and potatoes. Serve the ham and potatoes from the baking dish.

If the ham is very salty, soak it, preferably in buttermilk or sour milk, before cooking it with the potatoes. The acid of sour milk seems to soften the ham and make it very tender when cooked.

To repeat the menu: Ham and Potatoes en casserole; String Beans; Spiced Crab Apples; and Grapefruit, with Malaga or Tokay Grapes,



